probably half-a-crown would have 'exonerated' him still more. In the other instance, we have little sympathy with the cadger, who came in the way of the (till now, we had thought, irresistible) Duchess of Sutherland, in the shape of a railway 'secretary,' at Perth, *on a Sunday*, lately, and while her Grace was hastening, in all the sacredness of sorrow, to her dying father at Carlisle. The mail train to the south was ready,—two empty carriages stood attached, which it was no Scotch sin to send south on a Sunday to suit the company's convenience, but the cadger and his coadjutors had too deep an interest in her Grace's salvation to allow her to risk her own by entering the sinful vehicles, and not even the sacred sorrow of a woman could find its way by any crooked path into the stony citadel of the cadger's heart,—if he had one. It was 'against the rules,' and though there is no rule without exception, he would not risk either his snug little secretaryship or his salvation in any such cause. "We prophesy, however," says a Scottish reforming contemporary, "that the tears which have fallen down the cheeks of this angelic woman will not have fallen in vain. They may penetrate the heart of every sensitive man and woman in the empire, and conduce to a thorough reformation on this and other kindred lines of railway, too long under the management of narrow-minded bigots."——The following tenders for completing Stowmarket station have been received:—Mr. Saunders, of Dedham, 1,771*l.*; Mr. Baldiston, of Ipswich, 1,785*l.*; Mr. Ribbans, of Ipswich, 2,350*l.*; Mr. Revett, of Stowmarket, 2,535*l.*; Mr. Smith, of Dickleburgh, 2,887*l.*

ARTS OF CONSTRUCTION AT KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON.

PROFESSOR HOSKING'S LECTURES.

On Friday, the 6th October, Mr. Hosking commenced his course on the arts of construction in connection with civil engineering and architecture, at King's College, by an introductory lecture, in which he especially pressed upon the students before him the necessity of avoiding, for the time, all consideration of the branch of practice to which they were eventually to address themselves, urging them to believe, with him, that a thorough knowledge of construction is the only foundation upon which the professional education of either architect or civil engineer can be securely based, rendering it as essential to the one as to the other.

The advantages offered by these lectures, and others recently mentioned by us, are scarcely so well known as they should be, or so largely availed of as we desire to find them.

METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

Charges of Reckless Expenditure against the late Commissioners of Sewers for the Kent and Surrey District.—A general court was held on the 12th instant, at Greek-street, Soho. Lord Ebrington, M.P., in the chair.

On a bill for Parliamentary and other expenses, amounting to 1,593*l.* 17s. 3d., incurred in obtaining a Bill for enlarged powers to the Kent and Surrey Commissioners being presented, a voluminous report was brought up on the subject from the General Purposes Committee, which stated in the outset that as the bill for the payment of the Parliamentary expenses of obtaining a recent Act, which it has since been found necessary to repeal, forms one heavy item of expenditure incurred by the former commissioners of this district, which the committee have been constrained to recommend for payment, inasmuch as it is a payment under the authority of the present commission from rates levied under their authority, for which the ratepayers have had and will experience no benefit, the committee think it just and proper not to present this account for payment without calling the attention of the court to the state of the works and past management, of which this demand appears to them to form part.

The report further stated that this Act authorised an almost unlimited borrowing of money,—works being projected to the amount of 300,000*l.*; and, judging from the character of the works already executed, it was confidently stated that had the late commission not been superseded, the whole of this immense sum would have been wasted.

Other instances of the asserted mal-appropriation of the ratepayers' money is pointed out in the following paragraph of the report, which conveys a grave imputation on several parties, and casts a slur which seems to us quite unnecessary:—

"It is to be observed that each of the district surveyors would have participated in the sum of 15,000*l.* per-centage on the expenditure for the extension above mentioned of the Surrey works. The late clerk of the Surrey district was professionally educated. He received for the performance of his duties a salary of 700*l.* a year. It might have been presumed that such a salary was given him for devoting the whole of his time to the service of the commission, and that in that service would have been included the exercise of his professional ability, so as to render unnecessary further expenditure for professional aid. But we have presented to us charges for the preparation of contracts alone amounting in three months after the passing of the Act to 178*l.* 10s. in addition to the salary. So that the surveyors, with their per-centages on the works executed, and the clerk, by the fees on contracts, &c., had a direct interest in a large expenditure."

A contrast is then drawn between the works performed by the present commissioners in this district, and what would have been the cost under the old system, giving the following as cases in point:—

Place.	Old Plan.	New Plan.	Saving.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Boundry row	268 10 0	57 6 0	203 4 0
Clarence-street ..	90 0 0	20 0 0	70 0 0

A very grave charge is next made as to how loans were effected, and as to certain parties who had lent money at 4½ per cent., giving notice of the withdrawal of it unless 5 per cent. was secured. This demand, so disadvantageous to the interests of the ratepayers, was agreed to, the amount affected by it being 43,500*l.*, out of which sum 32,500*l.* belonged to two commissioners, who were present, and assisted in the acceptance of their own proposal for increasing their own interest.

It next notices the appointment of a nephew of the clerk as an assistant; and "a bill of charges of Messrs. Drew and Shadwell, parliamentary agents, and in many instances charges for attending and making copies for Mr. G. H. Drew, or in other words for attending and making copies for himself;" and surprise was expressed that such charges should have been allowed by the taxing-master of the House of Commons.

Incidentally, reference was made to the charge of 400*l.* by the clerk of the Poplar district for law charges, heavy sums for copying, &c., in addition to his salary,—a sum sufficient to lay down drains for upwards of 1,500 tenements.

The report next points out what the Committee considers some glaring instances as to how the ratepayers' money has been perverted in the following paragraphs:—

"For instance, all three surveyors of the Surrey and Kent Commission charge 3*l.* 3s. each per diem for attending to give evidence before the Sanitary Commission; there are also charges made of ten guineas each by two of the surveyors for giving evidence on a trial in the Tower Hamlets district.

"The like charges we have indeed found in some cases to have been made by officers whose whole time was paid for.

"In bills already paid by the former commissioners, we find such charges as the following:—In the surveyors' bills, first half-year 1847, there are charges for attending surveying officers, and at House of Commons, &c., amounting in these six months to 120*l.* 5s. 4d. And we find various charges made by the surveyors for attending on one another, and on the clerk. We also observe charges for making plans, surveys, &c., of works, on which 5 per cent. commission is also charged."

Allusion is also made to the allegation that, though Mr. Drew received so large a sum for his services as clerk, he held the multifarious offices of clerk to the Board of Guardians of Bermondsey, superintendent registrar and treasurer to the guardians of Streatham; and that the accounts were in such an embarrassed state that the commissioners were compelled to call in a public accountant to endeavour to unravel them, so loosely had they been kept for several years.

The report thus concludes:—

"It is requisite to advert to these charges, that the ratepayers may understand the application of part of the present levies, and that they are applied at present for purposes which the Commissioners cannot pronounce to be beneficial."

An answer to the charges has been submitted by Mr. Drew, in substance—that the money was authorised to be raised under Act of Parliament—that his salary was fixed by the Commissioners themselves—that out of the 178*l.* 10s. charged by him in preparing contracts, 75*l.* was expended in stamps alone—that the money borrowed could only be had on the terms stated, and the two commissioners alluded to, after making their proposals, retired—that the appointment of his nephew was the act of the commissioners—that the books were regularly audited, and if no indexes were kept, that none had been kept by his predecessor, nor did he find the practice a very common one in other public offices.

A very short conversation ensued on the report, which was received.

Correspondence.

THE CAEN STONE QUARRIES.

SIR,—In perusing your remarks upon the quarries at Caen, I find you have made reference to the facilities established for raising the blocks to the surface ground by means of steam power. The engine is six-horse power, and the whole apparatus, with buildings, &c. &c., has been at the exclusive cost of Messrs. Luard and Beedham, who, it is but just and right to inform you, are the only persons who have expended large sums of money in this particular department. They intend, when necessary, to apply the same or similar means to remove the superfluous water, and at the same time raise stone from the large *new quarry* to which you have also made reference.

SUBSCRIBER.

COMPETITION, HALIFAX.

SIR,—In reading your periodical my attention was arrested by an invitation to architects from the Committee for building the new church of St. Thomas, Heptonstall, Halifax, to send them designs for the proposed edifice. Surely, Sir, there must be a typographical error in that invitation, and an unit must have been omitted from all the sums specified.—10*l.*, 7*l.*, 5*l.*, must mean 100*l.*, 70*l.* 50*l.* The committee would never dream of offering such small premiums for professional assistance to enable them to expend to the greatest advantage 4,500*l.*—I am, Sir, &c. J. B. R.

Sleaford, Oct. 14, 1848.

*** Architects have brought these indignities on themselves.

DISTRICT SURVEYORS' CHARGES.

SIR,—In your last number, there appears a letter, signed "W. Trench, Builder, Hackney, October 4, 1848," from which (though not expressly stated) it will doubtless be inferred that the subject matter of complaint has occurred *in this district*. In justice to myself, I beg to state, that upon referring to my books I find no such name as that of "Trench," either giving notice of or having executed works in this district. I have made several inquiries amongst the builders of this neighbourhood, and I can find no one who knows Mr. W. Trench personally or by repute as "a builder."

There have been two works similar to those he describes lately done in this district, but no notice was given of them by the parties executing them, none has been taken by me, and no fee has been claimed.—I am, Sir, &c.

THE DISTRICT SURVEYOR OF HACKNEY.

Hackney, 18th October, 1848.

Miscellanea.

MOVEABLE PLATFORM FOR RAILWAY STATIONS.—SIR: May I hope that the novelty of the proposal which I wish, through the medium of your valuable journal, to lay before the public, will be a sufficient apology for thus trespassing on you. My proposal is to effect *a saving of time* in railway travelling, in the following manner:—At each station on a line of railway, where the trains have to stop, there should be constructed a moveable platform, mounted on wheels, and having a line of rails laid for it, extending a quarter of a mile either way from the station, in the directions which the trains take up. On this platform the passengers, goods, &c., intended for the coming train should be placed, which train, instead of stopping as is now usual, would have but to lessen its speed to a rate of about ten miles an hour, and in passing the station at this speed carry along with it the platform for such time as may be necessary for the removal of passengers, goods, &c., when the platform may be disconnected from the train and the ordinary speed resumed. That a saving of time could be thus effected is quite palpable; the practibility of the proposal, therefore, only remains to be tested.—R. R. M.

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